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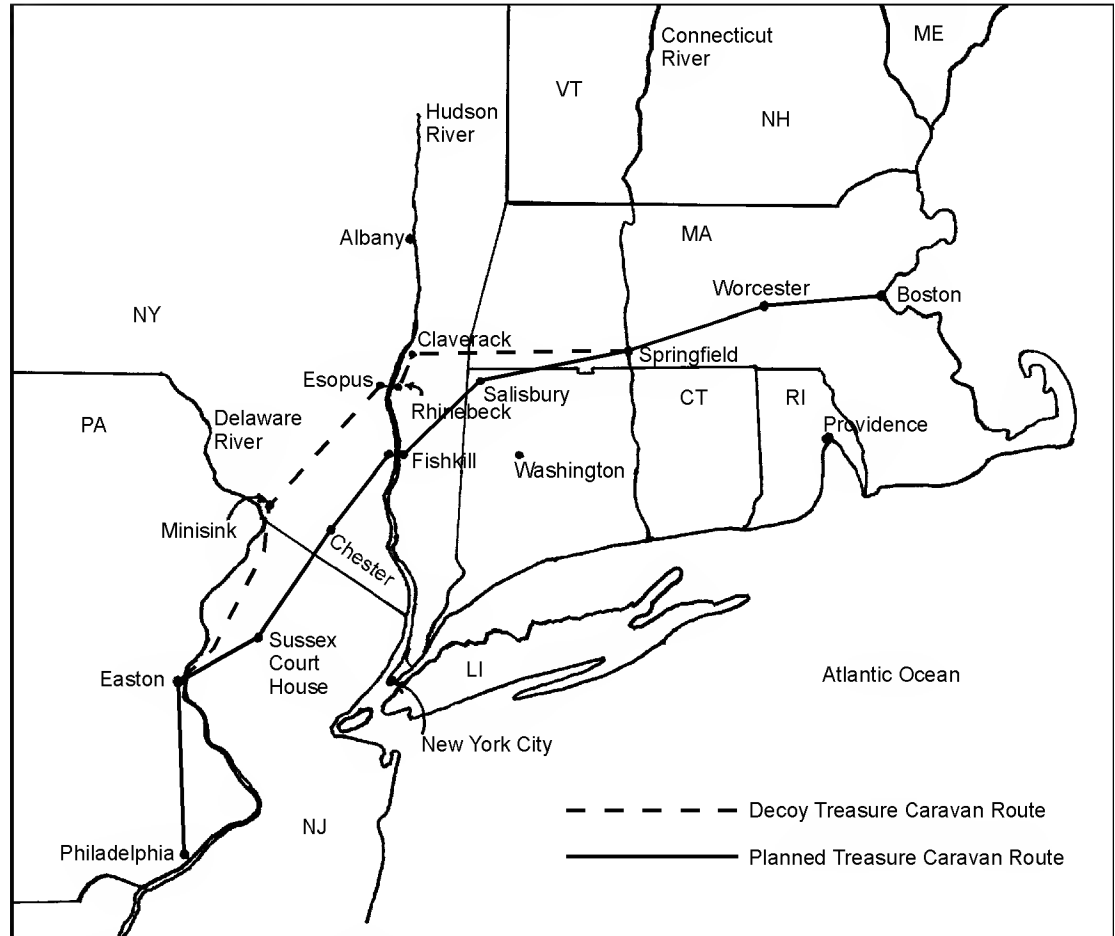
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THE FRENCH TREASURE CARAVAN

by Gary A. Trudgen; Endwell, NY

(G10)

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In 1781 a large sum of money given to our country by France to bolster the newly formed Bank of North America was transported under heavy guard via a secret route from Boston to Philadelphia - with a decoy route also part of the scheme.

The year 1781 opened on a dismal note for the new United States of America. With the Revolutionary War dragging into its sixth year, Continental Army troops mutinied because they had been unpaid for months. Paper money which had been issued by the states and Congress was virtually worthless and hard money was as scarce as hen's teeth. The Continental Treasury was bankrupt and the morale of the people was at its lowest ebb. Needless to say, bold action was required to reverse these events.

Congress adopted a new concept. Instead of trying to run the country through committees and boards made up of its own members, Congress set up separate administrative departments. Each department was headed by an executive responsible to Congress, but with authority to act

on his own. Only one man was considered for the post of Superintendent of Finance. The choice was Robert Morris, a Patriot whose individual financial standing commanded respect both at home and abroad. Hesitantly, Morris accepted the office.

Three days after he took office Morris submitted a plan to Congress to establish a national bank. Congress approved his plan on May 26, 1781 and the Bank of North America was born. A shop with a 40-foot front, belonging to Tench Francis, Jr., was leased and remodeled for the banking offices. The building was situated in Philadelphia on the north side of Chestnut Street, a short distance west of Third Street. Meanwhile, in another part of the world, events were unfolding that would be crucial to the bank's survival.

MONEY BEGINS ARDUOUS TREK

France had encouraged the American rebellion initially with clandestine supplies and later as an ally. In 1780 the United States plenipotentiary to France, Benjamin Franklin, obtained an outright gift from King Louis XVI of a little more than six million livres for the upcoming 1781 campaign. Of this amount, 2.5 million livres was in cash or specie. In December of that year, Congress appointed Colonel John Laurens special minister to the Court of Versailles (1). He arrived in Brest, France in mid-March 1781 with instructions to purchase military supplies on the King's account and to seek additional loans. Successfully completing his mission Laurens set sail from Brest for America on June 1. He sailed on the frigate *La Résolue* commanded by Chevalier de Langle, whose ship carried the specie which, in actuality, totaled 2,500,224 livres. In convoy were two transport ships, the *Olimpe* and *Cibelle*, laden with military stores valued at 2.2 million livres.

Their journey was long and arduous and many feared they were lost. But they arrived safely in Boston harbor on August 25. Laurens, who was probably overjoyed to have survived the voyage, quickly traveled to Philadelphia with his report to Congress. On September 4 Congress resolved that *"all the clothing, artillery, arms and military stores... be delivered to the order of the Board of War."* In addition, *"all the money shipped... for the use of the United States, be upon its arrival delivered to the order of the superintendent of finance,"* Robert Morris, *"who is hereby empowered and directed to take charge of the same."*

Morris quickly made arrangements to transport the specie, or treasure as it was referred to by the Americans, to Philadelphia. The treasure, which consisted of approximately 416,704 French silver crowns or ecus, was valued at \$463,004 in Spanish dollars (2). It had been remitted in 2,083 bags by Vaughn & Le Moine of Brest. Each bag contained about 200 crowns.

MISSION GIVEN TO TENCH FRANCIS, JR.

On September 10, a Monday, Morris recorded in his diary that *"For Three days past I have been anxiously looking out for a proper person to send to Boston to receive and bring forward to this City the Money lately Arrived there..."* from France. He hoped to find *"...a gentleman of approved honour*



and Honesty, of Mercantile knowledge and Abilities and of such an Active Indefatigable disposition as will be able to surmount difficulties and guard against dangers on the Road..." After considering several individuals, Morris chose Tench Francis, Jr., whose shop had been leased and converted into the Bank of North America. Francis quickly accepted the assignment because, as Morris said, "...it afforded an Opportunity to shew his firm attachment to the cause of America" (3). To assist Francis, Morris asked Major Samuel Nicholas of the marines to go along on the mission (4). Nicholas, however, was not told the purpose of the mission until he and Francis arrived in Boston.



The French treasure was a considerable sum of money and it was important to the survival of the new nation. Morris knew this and he carefully planned its shipment to the patriot capital. He wrote a number of letters of instruction to various personages involved or soon to be involved with the treasure. For example, he wrote John Hancock, then the governor of Massachusetts, requesting that he keep a tight guard on the money while it was in Boston. He wrote to Chevalier de

Langle, who still had the money on board his frigate, informing him that Tench Francis was to take possession of the treasure. He wrote to Major General William Heath, commander of the Continental Army in the lower Hudson region, requesting that he provide a military escort for the treasure caravan.

Before Francis and Nicholas departed Philadelphia on Wednesday September 12, Morris gave Francis detailed instructions on how to handle the treasure. Morris informed Francis that part of the treasure had arrived "*...in a very shattered Condition wherefore great Care and Attention must be paid to the Removal*" of the treasure from the ship. Francis was required to confirm the value of the treasure when he took possession of it, but because of the large sum involved counting each crown was out of the question. Instead, Morris suggested that from one to two thousand crowns be counted and then weighed with an accurate scale. With this reference, the remainder of the treasure could be weighed and its value determined with accuracy.

The weight of the treasure was formidable at 27,145 pounds avoirdupois or about 13.5 short tons. For this reason, Morris proposed that as much of the treasure as possible be "*...invested at Boston in bills of Exchange drawn by Authority of His Most Christian Majesty [King of France] or of the Honorable Congress...*" Morris believed that if Francis paid no more than seven livres per Spanish dollar for these bills that a profit could be made when they were sold in Philadelphia (5). And that this profit could be applied towards the cost of transporting the specie. Also, another advantage was that it would reduce the weight and value of the transported specie.

CARAVAN PREPARATIONS MADE

Three days after departing Philadelphia, Francis and Nicholas called on General Heath at Continental Village, on the east bank of the Hudson River about three miles north of Peekskill, New York. They delivered letters from Morris and the Board of War and probably had a good meal and night's rest before resuming their journey. By Monday September 24 they were in Boston and in the process of receiving the treasure from Governor John Hancock.

While in Boston, Francis purchased the items he needed to transport the treasure back to Philadelphia. He bought 14 ox carts or wagons, 28 yoke of oxen, 13 lead horses, and hired teamsters, whom he hoped were honest and sober men. Presumably in accordance with Morris' instructions, the bodies of the ox carts were removed. Then a large chest, constructed of thick oak planks, was attached to the axle and tongue of the cart. Inside the chest were placed about twenty small square oak boxes containing the French crowns. Morris estimated that each small box should contain from 1,500 to 2,000 crowns and that each large chest would contain about one ton of specie (6). Once the money was loaded, a lid was nailed on the chest. The chest was further secured by welded iron straps placed horizontally and vertically around the chest. Also, since the roads they were to travel were very rough, the axle, wheels and tongue of the cart had to be made very strong.

Out on the road, security was of the utmost importance. At Morris' suggestion, the Board of War ordered General Heath to provide a strong military escort for the treasure caravan. Even the teamsters were to be armed with muskets and bayonets. The commander of the escort was instructed to take proper positions along the road and to mount guards when they stopped. Also, the caravan route was carefully planned in advance, along with a decoy route.

The planned treasure caravan route was from Boston to Worcester, then to Springfield and Greenwood, all in the State of Massachusetts. The caravan would then pass through Salisbury, Connecticut and then go quickly into the State of New York, stopping at Fishkill (7). At this point, the caravan crossed the Hudson River, passing through Chester and into New Jersey. They were then scheduled to pass through Sussex Court House, cross the Delaware River at Easton and south into Philadelphia. The decoy route began at Springfield, Massachusetts. Francis was to tell inquirers that he planned to travel through Claverack, Rhinebeck, Esopus, Minisink, all of which were in New York State, and then into Easton and Philadelphia.

DEPARTS BOSTON WITH MILITIA GUARD

The exact chronology and route of the treasure caravan cannot be determined by available sources. What is known, however, is as follows. Francis informed General Heath that he would depart with the treasure from Boston on either October 4 or 5, accompanied by a guard of militia. For additional protection during this early part of the journey, Heath sent a detachment of dragoons towards Boston. Traveling at the rate of 12 to 15 miles a day, Francis expected to arrive in Springfield on Wednesday October 10. The military escort that was to accompany the caravan for the remainder of the trip was waiting in Springfield. It consisted of 40 light cavalry from Sheldon's 2nd Continental regiment under Captain Jeronimus Hoogland and 100 picked infantry under Major Amos Morrill of the 2nd New Hampshire regiment. Presumably, the militia guard returned to Boston once the escort took over. When he left Springfield, Francis was instructed to "*move with as much Rapidity as your Cattle will permit,*" since they were entering more dangerous territory.

On October 22, a Monday, the treasure caravan was in Washington, Connecticut, about 30 miles from Fishkill. It appears that Francis deviated from the planned route through Salisbury. Since it was impossible to plan for every contingency during the mission, Francis had the authority to make changes as he deemed necessary. At this time, General Heath reinforced the escort with an additional 50 infantrymen. It is likely that the caravan arrived in Fishkill on October 24. Here they rested a day in relative safety and then were ferried across the Hudson River at Fishkill Landing on Friday October 26. The same day that the caravan crossed the river, General Heath ordered a detachment of infantry under Lt. Colonel James Millen of the 4th Massachusetts "*to move on the lower road as far as Morristown, keeping between the escort and the enemy [who occupied New York City]*".

Now on the west side of the Hudson River, in one day's time the treasure caravan reached Chester. From there they proceeded into New Jersey, passing through Sussex Court House. It is uncertain, however, if Francis followed the planned route into Easton because he wished to avoid the "Vile Roads" and "bad Boats" at Easton. Nevertheless, on Monday November 5, Major Nicholas arrived in Philadelphia in advance of the caravan. He informed Robert Morris that the treasure was only 16 miles from the city and that it should arrive the following day. Morris quickly made preparations for its arrival.

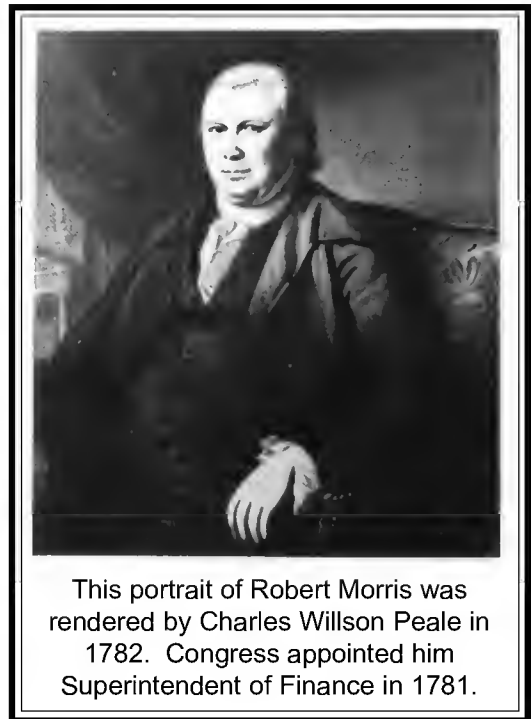
FINALLY ARRIVE IN PHILADELPHIA

Almost one month to the day from when the caravan left Boston, Francis triumphantly entered Philadelphia on November 6 with the treasure. It was a long and hard journey, but apparently without any harassment from the British. Morris wrote a congratulatory letter to Francis praising his "...great Care, Industry and Fatigue..." Also, in the letter he instructed him to deliver the treasure to Michael Hillegas, the Treasurer of the United States. Morris then directed Hillegas to have the treasure "...deposited in a proper and secure Place and by Application to the Hon. the Board of War you will obtain an Order for sufficient Guards to be placed over it." He further ordered Hillegas to not "...make any Payment or delivery from this Money..." without his approval.

Francis' work wasn't over. He settled with the teamsters and may have given the military escort a reward of one month's pay in specie. At the beginning of the mission, Morris had suggested that Francis could promise this reward to the guard if he thought it necessary to encourage their diligence during the mission. Morris also asked Francis "...to Advertize the Oxen, Horses and Waggon which brought the Treasure from Boston for Sale and to attend and Manage the Sales..." Francis placed an advertisement, dated November 10, in the *Pennsylvania Packet* newspaper. In the ad he informed the public that an auction was to be held on Saturday November 17 at 11 AM at the Continental Yard, located at the upper end of Chestnut Street in Philadelphia. The items to be sold were "Twenty-eight Yoke of Oxen, with their yokes, chain, etc. These are from 5 to 7 years old, remarkably large, perfectly well broke and sound, in excellent order for any kind of work. At the same time will be sold, 14 waggons, and 13 Horses, mostly young, and all have been used to lead oxen." Finally, Francis stated that the above items could be viewed anytime before the

day of the sale at his "plantation, on the Wissahickon Road, two miles from the Court House." On the Monday following the sale, he informed Morris that "...the Sales he made on Saturday of the Oxen and Horses that brought the Money from Boston ... went off pretty high." The sale fetched \$2,836.

Before Francis had begun the mission, Morris informed him to not "...look for an extravagant Reward for your Time and Trouble..." Francis' emolument would be determined once the mission was successfully completed. Morris even had the brashness to suggest that "The Pleasure of serving your Country and Confidence which is placed in you will be a more agreeable Part of your Reward." But before he had safely arrived with the treasure, Francis was rewarded for his efforts. On November 1, he was appointed first cashier of the Bank of North America at an annual salary of \$1,000.



This portrait of Robert Morris was rendered by Charles Willson Peale in 1782. Congress appointed him Superintendent of Finance in 1781.

WASHINGTON ATTENDS BANK OPENING

In order to open the Bank of North America a subscription of \$400,000 was to be raised by selling 1,000 shares of stock at \$400 each. Investors, however, were very cautious and by the time the treasure arrived only 180 shares had been sold. Morris promptly invested \$253,200 of the treasure by purchasing 633 shares of bank stock for the government, thus raising the subscribed capital to \$325,200. Even though the subscription was still short of the 1000-share goal, the bank directors applied for a charter of incorporation from Congress. On the last day of 1781, the charter was approved and the Bank of North America opened its doors on Monday, January 7, 1782. General Washington honored the ceremonies with his presence.

Unlike its beginning, the year 1781 closed on a bright note for the new United States of America. Peace was near. Cornwallis had been defeated at Yorktown in October, virtually ending the war and assuring our independence. Economic turn around was near. Thanks to the French treasure, the instrument needed to reverse our economic fortune, the Bank of North America, had been established.

ENDNOTES

- (1). Laurens was the son of Henry Laurens of South Carolina and former president of the Continental Congress.
- (2). One French crown was worth six French livres or one and one-ninth Spanish dollars.
- (3). Francis had been accused of Loyalist sympathies because of his family's service as land agents to the Penn family.
- (4). Nicholas was the first commissioned officer in the United States Marine Corps. He was noted for his "Activity, Spirit and Talents."
- (5). Morris' willingness to pay up to 7 livres for a Spanish dollar is puzzling. In a circular letter to the state governors on October 19, 1781, Morris stated that the nominal exchange rate was 5.4 livres per \$1 and at most 6.25 livres. Apparently, at this time, the rate of exchange in Philadelphia was higher.
- (6). Since the caravan consisted of 14 wagons, the divided total specie weight would be 1,939 pounds per chest or about one ton as Morris estimated. To obtain the preceding specie weight per wagon, with 20 small boxes per chest, each small box had to contain 1,488 crowns. These numbers suggest that very few, if any, bills of exchange were purchased in Boston.
- (7). At this time, Fishkill was the foremost depot of the Continental Army. It was a focal point of activity, attracting many of the principal officers.

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- (1). **Memoirs of Major-General William Heath**, edited by William Abbatt, New York, 1901.
- (2). **Pennsylvania Packet or the General Advertiser**, published by David C. Claypoole, Philadelphia, November 17, 1781.
- (3). **The Golden Voyage: The Life and Time of William Bingham, 1752-1804**, by Robert C. Alberts, Boston, 1969.
- (4). **The Papers of Robert Morris, 1781-1784**, Volumes 2 and 3, edited by E. James Ferguson, Pittsburgh, 1975.

CNL AFTERWORD

The story of the French treasure caravan is a very interesting and important Revolutionary War episode. It also has an interesting early American numismatic tie-in that was not mentioned in the original article. Benjamin Dudley, the man credited with the production of the 1783 Confederation patterns and later involvement with the production of New Jersey coppers, accompanied the treasure caravan.


Dudley, who was an American sympathizer and very talented metallurgist and mechanic, fled London in 1780 with the help of a Dr. Peirce. Dudley first went to France and then to Boston where he came under the notice of John Bradford, the Continental Agent in Boston. Bradford wrote Samuel Huntington, a member of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, recommending Dudley and explaining that Dudley had already proven his worth by assaying a large quantity of rough copper, finding it to be very pure. He went on to add that "*Mr. Dudley assures me he can Roll it into Sheets of any thickness and Can either harden or soften it. We find it to be very malleable, he tells me that if Congress should see meet to Strike of [sic] a parcel of Coppers for a Currency he Can make the Apparatus and go through the whole process.*"

Robert Morris, the Superintendent of Finance, wrote to Dudley in mid-July 1781 inviting Dudley to move to Philadelphia to help erect a Continental mint. Dudley, who was having financial difficulties, agreed to the proposition. When Tench Francis accepted the responsibility of transporting the treasure back to Philadelphia from Boston in September 1781, Morris asked Dudley to travel along. Morris instructed Francis to pay for Dudley's travel expenses and to purchase him a horse and saddle. He also suggested that Dudley could help prepare the treasure for shipment and then help protect it while they were on the road. Finally, Morris hoped that Francis would find Dudley to be "*...a useful, agreeable [sic] and entertaining Companion on the Road.*"

Morris, however, did not record Dudley's arrival in Philadelphia with the treasure caravan. Shortly after the treasure arrived, Dudley applied to the Office of Finance in Philadelphia for some money to pay his expenses. This indicates that Dudley did indeed accompany the treasure caravan as Morris had instructed.

The French Louis XVI crown or ecu of the American Revolutionary era, that made up the treasure, deserves a place in our numismatic heritage. The timely arrival of tons of this large silver coin allowed our first national bank, the Bank of North America, to open its doors.

Gary A. Trudgen, February 1996



THE BENNINGTON MUSEUM COLLECTION of VERMONT COPPERS

by Jeff Rock; San Diego, CA

(TN-168)

Perhaps the greatest collection of Vermont coppers ever formed belonged to the Bennington Museum in Vermont. The group consisted of a total of 96 coins, with several examples of most varieties, missing only the Ryder 5 to be complete from Ryder Numbers 1 through 39. Many coins ranked as the finest known of their variety, such as the outstanding Ryder 9, Ryder 13 and Ryder 15's that were long used as illustrations in the annual *Guidebook of United States Coins*. There were also die break progression sets for some varieties, and a number of oddities, the highlights being a Ryder 2 and a Ryder 3, each with an obverse impression on both sides. These two are plated in Ken Bressett's article on Vermont coppers published in the 1976 ANS publication *Studies on Money in Early America*.

The original collection had been formed by Bennington benefactor Hall Park McCullough, whose family had lived in the area for five generations. McCullough was born in 1872, and lived most of his life on the family "Hall Farm" in North Bennington; he died there in 1966 at the ripe old age of 94 years. McCullough often stated that the biggest disappointment in his life was that he was not actually born in Vermont. Actually born in San Francisco, records of his birth were destroyed by the earthquake and fire of 1906, thus erasing all traces of his early time away from the Green Mountain state. Both his father and his grandfather had served as governor of the state, and McCullough continued the family role of dedication and service to the community, serving on the boards of the Bennington Museum, the Bennington Free Library, the First National Bank of North Bennington and the Putnam Memorial Hospital. He also reached beyond the Green Mountains and served on the boards of the International Trading Company, the Bethlehem Day Nurse, the Friends of the Yale Library and the New York Historical Society.

Hall Park McCullough first started collecting Vermont coppers in the early 1930s, a perfect time for acquiring choice pieces because there was little serious competition from the numismatic community. McCullough loaned the pieces to the Bennington Museum and, on January 3, 1963, presented them to the museum as an outright gift.

A little over two years later disaster struck. Late Sunday night, March 14, 1965, thieves broke through a window upstairs and gained access to the museum. The case containing the 96 Vermont coppers was smashed and the coins scooped up; three pieces were dropped by the thieves as they made their escape. They also tried to take a large wall display of fractional currency but were unable to get it through the window and left it behind. They settled for pilfering \$15 from the cash register in the museum's office. The local press was outraged by the burglary and followed the story very closely. The following morning the value of the collection was placed at between \$10,000 and \$15,000, with the individual coins valued at between \$20 and \$400. A few days later the value of the collection was placed in excess of \$20,000, though even at that time the market value of the coins was considerably higher than that figure.

The FBI became involved in the investigation, partially because of the high value of the coins and partially because it was almost certain that the pieces would be transported across state lines. A week after the robbery their concerns proved accurate, and a few of the coins were seen in Boston. They were offered to a coin dealer by a 31-year old woman named Mary Hoover (who also used the alias Mary Stone), of Roxbury, Massachusetts. She claimed that she had "obtained the coins in a cafe." Investigators did not believe her story and she was arrested for receiving stolen property. She

jumped bail and did not appear at her trial; the local papers reported nothing else on the case, and it is unknown if Hoover was ever found, tried or served prison time for her crime. Eventually, 18 of the stolen coins were recovered, but that still leaves 75 pieces unaccounted for, some of which have certainly found their way into other collections today.

Prior to the time of the theft, Ken Bressett had arranged to have the entire Bennington collection photographed, and thus the stolen coins can still be traced. Within the past three years the Ryder 1 that was stolen and not recovered from the original burglary was offered for sale via auction. The return of the piece was negotiated and the coin is now back at the museum, though not yet on exhibit. The Ryder 15 that was stolen has also recently appeared and has become the centerpiece in a tug-of-war. It is doubtful that the museum will be able to reacquire that piece, the finest known example of the variety, and it will most likely find its way into a large private collection of Vermont coppers.

Because of the importance of Vermont coinage to the history of the state (Reuben Harmon's mint was only a few miles away from the site of the Bennington Museum), the collection was slowly built back up, aided by the well-known dealer and collector Bob Vlack. For a long time the coins were exhibited under the title of the Vlack-McCullough collection. The museum holdings include all varieties from Ryder 1 through Ryder 37 with the exception of the extremely rare Ryder 5, Ryder 32 and Ryder 34. In addition, the exhibit is missing a Ryder 7 although a Ryder 4 was misattributed and included in that spot.

The following is a brief description of the coins presently on exhibit in the Bennington Museum:

Ryder 1: Fine, smooth surfaces, small flan flaw at K-12 extending into bust, light lamination on neck. Weak at the center of the reverse, struck on a slightly larger planchet than usual. The recovered Ryder 1 has not yet been included in the exhibit; it is a Choice VF+ coin.

Ryder 2: The specimen in the exhibit is actually a Ryder 6, misattributed. The museum does own another Ryder 2 which is not on display yet, grading VF, with a small reverse rim bump before STELLA.

Ryder 3: Extremely Fine, small clip above LIC on the obverse, with some very light striking weakness. There is a small planchet flaw at the S in STELLA.

Ryder 4: Gem Uncirculated., virtually as struck! No trace of rub at all. Perfect, original surfaces. Light brown, slightly darker at the left obverse. Reverse quite strong. Perfectly centered. A simply amazing coin. There is another Ryder 4 in the slot for the Ryder 7 which grades VF+ with some light flaws and laminations on either side.

Ryder 5: Not present in the exhibit or the museum collection.

Ryder 6: Uncirculated, in the exhibit as a Ryder 2. Slightly darker color, with some original red in parts, original luster in the peripheries. Die file marks are visible below the plough, and even the rivers on the plough are sharp!. Perfect strike, perfectly centered. Early die state. The example exhibited in the Ryder 6 slot is a nice EF coin, with surfaces that are slightly granular. Full legends and date and with just minor laminations.

Ryder 7: Not present in the exhibit; the piece included here is actually a Ryder 4 (see above).

Ryder 8: About Uncirculated. Slightly weak strike, and lightly rough at NTENSIU on the obverse. Very light marks, but perfectly centered and overall quite pleasing.

Ryder 9: THE COIN. Perfect Gem Uncirculated, perfectly centered on a round planchet with full legends, full date, full sheafs of wheat on the reverse shield. One insignificant planchet pit below the T of AUCTORI, otherwise the piece is absolutely flawless. This is the Baby Head variety plated in the Guidebook and in the Bressett article, and is probably the single most important piece in the museum's holdings. Breen and other writers have stated that it was stolen and never recovered, though it has been safe in the museum since a week after the theft.

Ryder 10: Extremely Fine, some light reverse scratches are well-hidden. A small vertical obverse lamination through the bust. Glossy dark steel-grey brown, with full legends and date. This is also the Bressett plate coin.

Ryder 11: Fine/Very Fine, light planchet flaw at K-12, small but rather deep. Light hairline scratches. An unimpressive example that should be upgraded by the museum.

Ryder 12: About Uncirculated, lightly cleaned at the center of the obverse. The reverse has a few shallow laminations. Early die state, not overstruck on a Constellatio Nova copper.

Ryder 13: Choice Uncirculated, some original mint red on the obverse! Reverse lamination at the top, and from the typical late die state. An amazing coin.

Ryder 14: Choice Uncirculated, slightly weak at the obverse center, but with a good amount of original mint luster. The reverse exhibits crisp die finishing lines, the first this writer has ever seen.

Ryder 15: About Uncirculated in terms of actual wear. Matte-like dark jade-green surfaces from burial. Sharp letters and design detail. The obverse has some light laminations and oxidation, and there is a small edge flaw at K-1. The stolen Ryder 15 has surfaced but probably will not be returned to the Bennington museum, a shame since it would have fit in so well with the great coins the museum already owns.

Ryder 16: Choice Extremely Fine. Gorgeous medium brown surfaces, with some light obverse spotting but no real flaws or defects.

Ryder 17: Uncirculated, as struck. Lots of original gloss, nice medium brown surfaces. A small spot on the wreath on the obverse bust, else just about perfect.

Ryder 18: Extremely Fine, light green spots and a few hairline scratches on either side, otherwise with hard, slightly glossy surfaces. Full legends, date. The Bressett plate coin.

Ryder 19: Extremely Fine, late state of the obverse break. The reverse has some light scratches. Hard medium brown surfaces.

Ryder 20: Very Fine/Extremely Fine, rough at the reverse center and with some light corrosion at UCTO on the obverse. An unimpressive example of this available variety.

Ryder 21: Extremely Fine, dark brown and glossy. Three very light rim nicks visible on the reverse. Late die state. Quite choice and with good eye appeal.

Ryder 22: Very Fine/Extremely Fine, many light hairline scratches on either side, and a small dig at the OR of AUCTORI. Medium brown. Fairly early state of the reverse break.

Ryder 23: Extremely Fine/About Uncirculated, light planchet flaw at the N of VERMON. Black encrustation of the reverse. This is an interesting piece, with the obverse letters thin and oddly shaped, but the surfaces aren't porous or pitted, which would have suggested some sort of burial or corrosion. Was the obverse die reground? Is this post-striking erosion of some sort?

Ryder 24: Fine, reverse a bit nicer. Light scratches on either side. Another unimpressive example of a common variety and one that will hopefully be upgraded by the museum .

Ryder 25: Extremely Fine/About Uncirculated, weak at the centers but with some good luster. Not overstruck on another coin. Medium brown, very clean planchet.

Ryder 26: Extremely Fine/About Uncirculated, the obverse with a small corrosion spot at E of VERMON, extending to the bust, else with medium brown, slightly rough but still glossy surfaces. Full reverse break. Planchet size is roughly 25 mm.

Ryder 27: Choice Extremely Fine, slightly glossy but with some microscopic roughness and small rim dents. Good detail and nice color.

Ryder 28: Extremely Fine, overstruck on a counterfeit Irish halfpenny, quite vivid on the reverse. Light brown, slightly rough planchet, with a small clip at K-9. Late die state.

Ryder 29: About Uncirculated, with a few light green spots on either side. INDE is weak, else quite sharp, with some die finishing lines visible on either side. Light planchet striations. Planchet is roughly 24 mm.

Ryder 30: Choice Very Fine, possibly a bit nicer. Light brown surfaces. Most of AUCTORI is off the planchet including the inverted "C" in that word], as is the date, a shame since the rest of the coin is so choice.

Ryder 31: Choice Extremely Fine, strong strike (almost unheard of for the variety), with a partial date. Nice medium brown surfaces, with a very small rim clip at K-5.

Ryder 32: Not present in the collection.

Ryder 33: Good/About Good, just enough detail left to attribute the piece with certainty. Rough medium brown surfaces, probably from burial. Overstruck on a counterfeit British halfpenny, the undertype quite vivid on the obverse. An ugly coin but a very rare variety.

Ryder 34: Not present in the collection.

Ryder 35: Very Fine, boldly struck over a counterfeit Irish halfpenny, the undertype oriented obverse/reverse, reverse/obverse. Hard surfaces with a very heavy obverse scratch .

Ryder 36: Very Fine, obverse slightly weaker than that grade. The surfaces are micro-granular, though the legends and date are full and sharp.

Ryder 37: Very Good/Fine, slightly granular surfaces, with light obverse planchet flaws on the effigy's neck. TO of AUCTORI is weak. Small straight clip at K-8.

Ryder 38, 39 and 40 are not present in the collection.



Benjamin Dudley and Robert Morris: The Saga Continues

by
**Michael Hodder; Wolfeboro, NH
(CS-5)**

Earlier this year, volume 8 in the series *The Papers of Robert Morris* was published. Like the preceding seven, the new volume has offered us a glimpse into events important to the numismatic history of the early republic.

The first seven volumes covered the period during which Robert Morris, the financier of the revolution as Sumner called him, and Benjamin Dudley, the English emigre mechanic, together conceived of and made the 1783 Nova Constellatio pattern coinage. The newly released eighth details the next series of events in the numismatic story, from May through December, 1783. It offers suggestive new evidence that must be carefully considered since it is quite equivocal!

By way of a brief rehearsal of what we have already learned from the seven preceding volumes, by April, 1783 Dudley had coined the Nova Constellatio patterns and had delivered them to Morris, as ordered. Morris later sent them to Congress for their consideration, had argued for the authorization of a mint, but had been disappointed in his hopes. Congress allowed the issue of establishing a mint to lapse, the pattern coins would up in Charles Thompson's custody, and Morris began urging Dudley to find some other employment.

This is where the story became somewhat speculative. Readers may remember my attempt at reconstruction in CNL 97. It was my belief, based upon the evidence at hand, that Dudley and Morris coined public copper into the regular issue 1783 Nova Constellatio coins we know, today.

Now, enter volume 8 of the Morris papers.

We find that Dudley wasn't turned loose on his own resources right away. In fact, during early May, 1783, Morris employed Dudley to oversee the making of paper for the army pay and subsistence notes Morris was to issue in June. For example on May 6, 1783 Morris wrote in his diary: "Sent for Mr. Dudley and desired him to go down to Mr. Mark Wilcok's to see 15,000 Sheets of paper made fit to Print my Notes on." (These were Morris' army pay notes.) Dudley was none too well off financially at this time, however, and we read in Morris' diary for the following day "This day delivered Mr. Dudley the paper Mold for making Paper marked United States and dispatched him to Mr. Wilcok's but was obliged to advance him 20 Dollars." This mold, incidentally, proved to be unacceptable, and another was made with a new watermark, "National Debt", and Dudley was dispatched to deliver the new mold on May 9. For the next several weeks Dudley seems to have spun his wheels, making little progress in overseeing the printing of the army pay notes. On May 27, Morris recorded "I sent for Mr. Dudley to know if he has compleated the Paper at Mr. Wilcocks's paper Mill for the Certificates intended for the pay of the Army, he says it is made but not yet sufficiently dry for the Printers use. I desired him to repair down to the Mill and bring it up soon as possible." By June 2, Dudley could report that the paper was now ready for printing. Morris sent the wording of the notes to the printers, Hall & Sellers, and sent Dudley to deliver the paper to Hall's shop.

The notes Morris referred to were the Army subsistence pay notes, of which only one specimen appears to survive, the specimen that surfaced in R.M. Smythe's sale of last February. By way of brief background to these important fiscal artifacts, despite hostilities being ended, the Continental Army had not been paid. The officers and men been living off advances against pay expected from contractors, or had sold their pay certificates to contractors in return for goods at

inflated prices. Morris urged Washington to furlough the army, saying he could raise enough money to cover notes worth three months pay that would be payable in 6 months, but only if the army were disbanded so as not to be a constant drain on resources. Others told Washington that if he did not furlough the army, given its state of unrest, it might mutiny. Washington realized that disbanding the army without pay might also cause a mutiny, so he urged Morris on June 3 to get the subsistence pay notes ready. Morris replied the notes weren't ready and said Washington should not disband the army until they were. However, Washington had already made such arrangements. He read to the troops Morris' letter that said furloughing the army was necessary to save money towards their pay. Washington allowed the army to decide whether it wanted to go home or wait in the field for its pay notes. Meanwhile, Morris began signing the subsistence pay notes on June 6. By June 15 \$100,000 worth of notes reached the army, but large numbers of soldiers who agreed to be furloughed had already left camp, some in rags.

On May 28, Whitehead Humphreys arrived at Morris house and offered to lease his lot and buildings as a location for Morris and Dudley's mint. We have met Humphreys earlier in this story. In February of 1782, Morris sent Dudley to consult with Humphreys about the designs Dudley had drawn for the mint's screws and rollers. Humphreys was one of the foremost iron makers in Pennsylvania and a pioneer in the making of steel. In 1786, the state of Pennsylvania loaned him £3,000 for five years on double security but no interest, to assist him in manufacturing steel. Frank Stewart wrote that Humphreys' lot was on the east side of South Seventh Street, below Market, "...about where the Franklin Institute now stands..."

Dudley still lacked a steady source of income. His experience in overseeing making the paper for Morris' army pay notes led Morris to recommend his services to the Bank of New York early in June, 1783. Dudley still pinned his hopes on the mint that Morris had first proposed to him two years earlier.

Exciting news was heard early in July, 1783. Dudley learned that there was a coining press for sale in New York City. On July 5, Morris wrote in his diary "Mr. Benjn. Dudley gave notice that he has received back from Messrs. Hall & Sellers the Printers three Thousand Sheets of the last Paper made by Mr. Wilcocks. I desired him to bring it to this office. He also informs me of a Minting Press being in New York for Sale and Urges me to purchase it for the use of the American Mint." Morris appears to have made no decision, for two days later we find Dudley back at Morris' house. This time, Morris was curt, writing in his diary for July 7 that he had no time to see Dudley.

For the next five weeks, Dudley appears in Morris' diary only as an applicant for subsistence money. By the middle of August, 1783, Morris must have decided that his plans for the American Mint would never amount to anything. On the 19th of that month his diary notes "I sent for Mr. Benjamin Dudley and informed him of my doubts about the establishment of a mint and desired him to think of some other employment in private service in which I am willing to assist him all in my Power. I told him to make out an Account for the Services he had performed for the Public and submit at the Treasury Office for Inspection and Settlement." Eleven days later, Dudley surrendered the pattern Nova Constellatio dies and Morris recorded "Mr. Dudley brought the Dies for Coining in the American Mint."

On September 3, Dudley was back, again asking for money for his expenses. Morris paid him, but urged that he find private employment. On the following day, Dudley showed up on Morris' doorstep again, once more asking for money. This time, after Morris paid him, he also gave Dudley a new commission. The diary is only partially legible and it appears to read that Morris directed Dudley "...to make three Models for constructing Dry." The editors of volume 8 of the Morris papers write that the word that looks like "Dry" is uncertain, but they feel that the word Morris actually wrote is "dies". In this regard, it is interesting to note that on September 3, Benjamin Dudley received a treasury warrant of \$110 for board."

There are no further references to Dudley in Morris' diary until the entry for November 21, when we find Dudley back for more money. Morris writes "Mr. Dudley applies for Money. He says he was at half a Guinea a Week and his Expenses borne when he left Boston to come about the Mint and He thinks the Public ought to make that good to him. I desired him to write to me and I will state his Claim to Congress." Three days later, Dudley was back for more money. On the 25th., Dudley showed up again, asking for money. On the 26th, Dudley once again asked for money. That same day, the Treasury Waste Book records a payment of \$266 60/90ths to Dudley for services he had performed. There are only two further references to Dudley in the newly published volume 8 of Morris' papers. On December 17, Dudley arrived at Morris' house with his final statement of accounts. Morris sent him to see the Comptroller of the Treasury. On the 31st, Dudley showed up again, "to settle his Accounts", as Morris put it.

Working with the Morris papers is a little like following a soap opera. No sooner do you get to a good part, than the episode ends and you have to wait until next week to find out what happens. Accordingly, any conclusions drawn from the published portions of Morris' papers will have to be tested by the contents of the volumes yet to be edited. There are a few that seem to be pretty sure at this point, however.

First, we know that there was a mint in Philadelphia in 1783. It was where Dudley struck off the pattern Nova Constellatio coins. It was probably rudimentary, but we shouldn't forget that, while Hull and Sanderson's Boston Mint was an 8 x 10 back building, it saw the coining of some very well made large planchet Pine's, for example. The American Mint, as Morris named it, also had the screws and rollers Wheeler had made for Dudley. There must also have been some sort of edging machine. There were, as well, a facility for smelting copper in quantity and a planchet cutter with interchangeable heads for different sized blanks. Dudley's mint must have had a coining press, but it couldn't have been exactly what he wanted, since he tried so hard to persuade Morris to buy the one that was for sale in New York in July, 1783. Incidentally, whose press was that? The British army still occupied New York City in July, so the press was either already there in New York when the British took the city, or they imported it, themselves. (I can't imagine that it had been smuggled into the city by private persons, since the ports were watched closely). Could it have been the press on which the Continental Currency coins of 1776 had been struck? What became of this press? That's another question yet to be answered. In CNL 97 I quoted from a letter of Rufus King's dated September 5, 1785, in which King wrote that "...a company are here who brought with them from England the various machines and implements necessary for a coinage, and have rendered their services—a coinage in our own country is more pleasing than one abroad." Perhaps what King was referring to was what we catch a fleeting glimpse of in Morris' diary? There's still no way of knowing, exactly.

Finally, what are we to make of Morris' order to Dudley to make three dies (if that's what that word was)? The order came just a few weeks after Morris told Dudley to forget about the mint as a career. Yet it also came on the same day Dudley was paid \$110 by the treasury, and Dudley received a further, larger sum two months later. Clearly, Dudley was engaged in some sort of public work that required payment by the treasury from public funds. When we remember that Crosby records three die pairs for the 1783 Nova Constellatio coppers we may, perhaps, be excused the inevitable speculation that the "three dies" Morris ordered Dudley to make in September, 1783, are the three we see on the 1783 Nova Constellatio coppers, today.

We have to stay tuned to the Morris papers, hoping to read the next episode in this continuing story. There are many questions that may never be adequately answered. There are some, perhaps the most tantalizing ones, that are almost in sight. Maybe volume 9 will have the answer to what became of Dudley and the American Mint!



THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEN AND BOYS IS THE PRICE OF THEIR TOYS

or

Now I Have A Humdinger New Jersey 57-n!

by

Roger A. Moore, M.D.; Moorestown, NJ

(TN-169)

"You did what?," was my wife's shocked response after receiving the details about the New Jersey Maris variety 57-n that I had won in the sale of John Griffie's New Jersey copper collection at the recent C4 auction (1). I tried to defend my viewpoint and the price paid by explaining the great historic significance of the coin. This particular coin had been in the collection of none other than the renowned collector of colonial coins – Dr. Jacob N. Spiro (2) – before being passed on through the collections of Herbert M. Oechsner (3) and John M. Foreman, Sr. (4). Of course, I left out the small detail that the sale of this coin from the Spiro collection had brought the outrageous price of \$16.00 in 1955 – a detail apt to be omitted by most copper collectors when describing to wives their exploits in obtaining a particular coin!! I also tried to garner my wife's sympathy by explaining what a truly rare coin the 57-n actually is, with only some 15 examples presently known to have survived – making the coin a solid R-6 if not a R-6+ (5). However, after all my attempts to convince her otherwise, I knew that I had been unsuccessful when her primary reaction was, "We could have had a new refrigerator!!!" Her lack of understanding of the truly important things in life was appalling.

The 57-n New Jersey copper is the rarest of the three colonial coins grouped under the heading of "camel head" varieties (6). All three "camel head" obverses (Maris types "56," "57," and "58") have the "n" reverse. Of interest, there are no other New Jersey obverses paired with the "n" reverse. A recent study of die states by Tom Madigan (7) indicates that the "n" reverse underwent deterioration from an initially perfect die state (die state 0). The first evidence of a die break was the appearance of a break from the rim between "E" to the shield edge (die state I), followed by a break from the rim through the upper right serif tip of the first "U" to the shield (die state II). A review of the plated auction appearances of "camel head" varieties indicates that the "58" obverse is always paired with a perfect "n" die state. The "56" obverse can be found with a perfect "n" reverse but is far more commonly found with a reverse die state II. The 57-n is more problematic since the four other plated appearances of this coin (Auctions by Bowers and Merena - 10/1980, lot 1456; 11/1989, lot 1633; 11/1991, lot 204; and 3/1992, lot 1415) have such poorly differentiated "n" reverses that the die state cannot be accurately determined. However, my coin does clearly show the upper left reverse and to a lesser extent the lower left portion without evidence of either die break (see Figure 1-B). Therefore, in trying to assign a sequence for emission of these varieties, it is clearly evident that minting of the 58-n occurred prior to the 56-n. The limited available data would also support the minting of the 57-n prior to the 56-n but the sequencing of the 57-n in relationship to the 58-n remains unclear. In fact, based on the presence of 56-n's with perfect reverse die states, some other methodology other than reverse die deterioration will be required in order to clarify the proper minting sequence.

The updated die state analysis by Tom Madigan (7) also indicates the presence of three die states for the "57" obverse. Of interest, no perfect die state is known. Die state I shows a horizontal crack from the mid-neck region that extends across the right field through the right leg of the second "A" in CAESAREA to the rim. This can be seen in lot 1456 of the Bowers and Merena 10/1980 sale. The die crack becomes heavier extending into the left field through the "O" in NOVA to the



Figure 1-A: Obverse 57 showing a massive die break horizontally across the coin's face.



Figure 1-B: Reverse n with no evidence of die breaks.


rim in die state II, as shown in lot 204 of the 11/1991 Bowers and Merena auction. Finally, in die state III sinking of the lower field occurs with a weakening of the letters "NO" in NOVA and "AREA" in CAESAREA. The coin under discussion seems to fall between die state II and III (see Figure 1-A).

An enigma surrounding all the "camel head" varieties is the location of the site where their minting actually occurred. The two primary theories place the mint for these coins at either Machin's Mills, New York (6) or Elizabethtown, New Jersey (8). The primary argument for New York being the mint site stems from observations made by Walter Breen (6, 9) concerning the similarity of letter punches used in preparing dies for the Machin's Mills coinage, particularly the 1788 Connecticut coppers which are considered to be Machin's Mills products, and those used in making the "camel head" dies (10). However, the validity of previous die punch attribution work has recently come under criticism (11,12), and such evidence should be considered potentially misleading. Other proposed evidence was the use of underweight host coins which occurred frequently at Machin's Mills, and the presence of large serrated denticles which are characteristic of other Machin's Mills products. The first to call into question Machin's Mills as the mint location for the "camel head" varieties was William Anton, Jr. in his classic paper (8). While acknowledging that Machin's Mills was generally accepted by most colonial scholars as the probable mint site, Anton argued for a New Jersey location of the mint. He pointed out that die sinkers, such as James F. Atlee, would typically travel from mint to mint. Therefore, die punch similarities between coins could not serve as absolute evidence for relating coins to a specific mint site.

Mossman offers further evidence against Machin's Mills as the site for the "camel head" minting (10). He points out that the long life of both the "56" obverse and the "n" reverse would indicate a fairly advanced capability of the die maker in properly hardening the dies and the minter in annealing the host coins prior to minting. Such an advanced minting process was not evident at Machin's Mills considering the poor coinage, particularly the Vermont coppers, being produced as its minting operations began winding down (13). Also, the "camel heads" could not have been an early Machin's Mills endeavor, since 1788 Connecticut and Vermont coppers thought to have been minted at Machin's Mills are found as "camel head" undertypes (10). Generally, coinage from Machin's Mills did not have the same diversity of host coins found as undertypes compared with the "camel heads." Specifically, most of the Machin's Mills 1788 Connecticut coppers had a Nova Constellatio undertype and most of the Machin's Mills Vermont coppers had an Irish half penny undertype (10). On the other hand, the Elizabethtown mint under the direction of Matthias Ogden used a diversity of host coins in its mintage, similar to that found under the "camel heads".

If we accept that Machin's Mills was probably not the mint for the "camel heads," what evidence other than the diversity of the host coins do we have for an Elizabethtown mint site? One piece of evidence is the weight characteristics of the "camel head" group (10). The "camel heads" have a mean weight of 127.2 grains (standard deviation = 16.8 grains). Mossman's evaluation of the weight distributions of New Jersey coins from other New Jersey mints shows the closest correlation to be with the group of overstruck coins from the Elizabethtown mint (125.1 grains with a standard deviation of 20.3 grains). Though this is certainly not conclusive evidence, it does serve as an indirect indicator. The best conclusion at this time seems to be that the "camel heads" were not minted at Machin's Mills and they were probably minted at Elizabethtown or some other mint with advanced technological capability (10). Whatever the site of the mint, the large numbers of these lightweight coppers led to the downfall of New Jersey coinage as a trusted unit of exchange. On June 7, 1790 the New Jersey General Assembly heard evidence that large numbers of underweight New Jersey coppers overstruck on host coins were flooding the state. The primary coin that caused this problem is thought to be variety 56-n (14). The loss of confidence by the public in the integrity of New Jersey coinage allowed the copper panic of 1789 to extend to New Jersey coppers by 1790 (10).

The 57-n in Figure 1 is considered the ninth best example of the fifteen existing coins that are known (1,5). An obvious and striking (detracting) feature of the coin is the three prominent holes that were made after minting. A disproportionately large number of the surviving examples of this variety are holed. (Four of the fifteen existing specimens have holes.) Of interest, another relatively rare New Jersey variety thought to originate from Elizabethtown (72-z) also has a number of holed examples. The reason holes were placed in this coin may have been for the creation of a cheap toy, called a humdinger (15). By passing a string through two of the holes, joining the two free string ends, and pulling on the resultant loops of string on both sides of the coin, the coin could be made to twirl back and forth making a humming sound. This coin may well have been a plaything for some colonial child!

The idea that this coin once served as a toy intrigued me. As I was cutting a piece of string to try out my new buy, my wife saw the coin for the first time. I half expected, "You fool, the thing is riddled with holes!!!" So I tried to explain the immense historic value of the holes. However, she left me shaking her head, as I happily completed my task of stringing my new toy. 

Acknowledgment: I would like to thank Phil DeVicci for the use of his expertise and equipment in making the photographs for this paper.

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A NEW JERSEY 42 1/2-c DISCOVERED
or
THERE ARE STILL RARITIES TO BE FOUND!

by
Roger Moore, M.D.; Moorestown, NJ
and
Chris Young; Pasadena, MD

(TN-170)

The fall season of 1995 has been enlivened for New Jersey colonial copper collectors due to the discovery of an entirely unknown 1787 obverse (labeled 42 1/2) paired with a "c" reverse (See Figures 1-A and 1-B). The new coin was discovered by Ed Kucia in a "junk box" reported to be located in Ohio (New Jersey collectors are now descending en masse on Ohio). Don Valenziano acquired the coin and it now resides in the ever growing collection of rare New Jersey coppers owned by Chris Young. The primary differentiating characteristics of the 42 1/2 obverse are the coultered plow, curved beam, and short, steeply oriented plow handles. The horse's head is similar in size along with the position of the ears with respect to the legend to the corresponding characteristics found on obverses "41," "44" and "48." Other important characteristics of the coin include: weight, 149.5 grains; diameter, 27.3 mm; and axis, 194 degrees. The obverse of the coin grades Very Good-10 while the reverse is a Good-5. The poorer condition of the reverse in comparison to the obverse is characteristic of many of the New Jersey coppers with "c" reverses.



Figure 1-A: Obverse of the
42 1/2-c discovery coin.



Figure 1-B: Reverse of the
42 1/2-c discovery coin.

There are four other New Jersey coppers with some variant of the "c" reverse. They are varieties 38-c, 41-c, 42-c, and 44-c.1. The difference between the "c" and the "c.1" reverse is that the "c" reverse has a characteristic "die blip" which is found at the left lower edge of the shield just lateral and below the point where the second left pale intersects the shield's edge (See Figure 2-B). This die break, or more probably die gouge, is absent on the "c.1" reverse. In addition, the shield of

the "c.1" reverse is larger than the "c" shield with the extension of the right shield point to a position nearly touching the bottom of the first "U" in UNUM. There are two schools of thought accounting for the differences between the "c" and the "c.1" reverses. Both accept that the two reverses arose from the same die. One proposal (1) is that the "c" reverse came first but due to die damage the minters decided to re-engrave the reverse, covering up the "die blip" and producing a larger shield - the "c.1." An argument against this scenario is the large numbers of the "c" reverse coins in existence. After minting so many of the "c" reverse coins, why did the minters suddenly find the die unacceptable? The alternate proposal (2,3) is that the "c.1" die was used first but due to a massive die break the reverse die was reground, repolished, and re-engraved before being put back into use as the "c" reverse die. Since the "c.1" reverse is only found paired with the "44" obverse, a weakness in the first theory is the lack of any 44-c.1 coins showing evidence of a die break in the reverse. All 44-c.1 coppers that are known have a perfect unbroken reverse die state (3). The new discovery 42 1/2-c does not help to clarify this issue. The reverse of the 42 1/2-c is definitely the more common "c" type with the characteristic "die blip." Of interest, the "c" and "c.1" reverses are the only New Jersey reverses with shields having seven pales, rather than the typical six pales (4). Each pale in both the "c" and "c.1" reverse is made up of three gule lines.



Figure 2-A: Obverse of variety 38-c.



Figure 2-B: Reverse of variety 38-c showing the "die blip" at the lower left edge of the shield.

No further discussion of the 44-c.1 will be offered at this time other than to say that it is a true rarity-7 copper with only 10 existing specimens known (3). The 42 1/2-c most closely falls into the group of coins comprised of varieties 38-c, 41-c, and 42-c. All of these coins are thought to have been part of the contracted production of New Jersey coinage performed at Daniel Marsh's grist mill in Rahway, New Jersey by Thomas Goadsby and Albion Cox (1,5). The die sinker thought to have been involved in making the Rahway dies was James F. Atlee, although die punch linkage data which has been used to draw a relationship between die sinkers and mints has been criticized (6,7). In any case, ascribing all the "c" reverse coins, including the new 42 1/2-c, to a single mint site seems logical and the "c" reverse coins are more characteristic of Rahway minted coppers than the Morristown coinage.

The most common "c" reverse coin is variety 38-c (see Figures 2-A and 2-B). The rarity status of 38-c was adjusted from a rarity rating of 3 to a rarity of 2 at the recent *Third New Jersey Copper Symposium* (8). All 38-c coppers have a "c" reverse containing the "die blip" at the lower left edge of the shield (9). The 38 obverse stands out from other New Jersey coppers by having the smallest horse's head and it is paired with reverses "L", "Y", "Z", "a", and "b", in addition to the "c" reverse. The "41" obverse (see Figure 3-A) is only known to be wedded to the "c" reverse. The 41-c is a relatively rare coin, but the rarity status has recently been dropped from rarity-6 to rarity-5 based on condition census data from John Griffiee (10,11). At present there are 37 known examples of the 41-c and all have a "c" reverse containing the characteristic "die blip" (11). The 42 obverse die (see Figure 3-B) is also paired only with the "c" reverse. Its rarity status has also been changed recently from a rarity-6 to a rarity-5 based on John Griffiee's data (12). All 41 specimens of the known 42-c coppers have the characteristic "die blip" in the "c" reverse. Similar to the 42 1/2-c, many of the 41-c and 42-c coins are found with the condition of the reverse at least one grade less than the obverse (10,12).



Figure 3-A: Obverse of variety 41-c.



Figure 3-B: Obverse of variety 42-c.

The "41" and "42" obverse dies are found combined only with reverse "c".

Though the specifics of the new 42 1/2-c New Jersey state copper are of interest, particularly to the crazed collector of New Jersey coppers, the real lesson to be learned is that there are still discoveries to be made. Compare your "c" reverse coins with this new find - you may have one also!! **CNL**

Acknowledgment: We would like to thank Phil DeVicci for the use of his expertise and equipment in making the photographs for this paper. Additionally, we note that the designation of 42 1/2-c was established jointly by Michael Hodder and Ed Kucia. The image of Figure 3-A is from the Henry C. Miller sale of May 26-29, 1920, lot 432 (CNL file photo.).

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An Unlisted Betts Muling

from

Michael Oppenheim
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

(RF-67)

In 1994 a hitherto unknown medal appeared in a Stacks auction, of March 22-3, as part of a group of Betts medals with an impressive pedigree. The medals traced their provenance to the Wayte Raymond's sale of the famous Charles P. Senter Collection of October 1933, lot number 25. They had resided until recently in the possession of the Canadian numismatist and author of *Les medailles decrenees aux Indiens d'Amerique*, Victor Morin, and later his heirs.

The most intriguing piece was a silver medal, lot 473, that combined the reverse of B.611 with a "reverse" of a medal of the Ordre de Saint Michel 1729. The medal is silver, 41.3 mm and 489.7 grains. It does not have any die rusting or breaks on either side. The B.611 side of the medal—which now will be designated as the obverse, signed "DuVivier," has a representation of Peace standing, with olive branch in her right hand and a horn of plenty in her left, resting her left foot on the prow of a ship. The legends are "Pax Franciam Inter Et Angliam," and in exergue, "Versalis"/"MDCCLXXXIII." The "reverse," signed "LB" (Jean le Blanc) shows St. Michael with raised sword standing above a supine devil, surrounded by the Order's collar. The legend "Regius Sti. Michaelis Ordo" on the top border and the date "M.DCCXXIX" at bottom.

The medal did not appear in Shulman's *"Paix in Nummis"* sale and inquiries with some Betts collectors did not result in a report of an example.

The catalogue description did not speculate about the reason for striking the medal. It is possible that it was struck as a rarity for collectors, a so-called *piece de caprice*, perhaps sometime after the B.611 originals were struck. On the other hand, there may be a more legitimate reason, as there is a possible thematic link between the design of the obverse and the muled reverse.

The Order of Saint Michael was instituted in 1469 by Louis XI and it continued, with some interruption following the French Revolution, until 1830. It was founded as a civic order of "chevaliers," the maximum number of which could not exceed 36, who were recognized for their contributions to the arts and sciences. The members were chosen by the King. They included doctors, lawyers, teachers, civil servants, etc.

The Order was named after the Archangel Michael. The idea for the Order was conceived by the French King, Charles VII, in honor of St. Michel. Charles wanted to give thanks to St. Michael, who was regarded as the defender of France against the onslaught of the British during his reign. However, it fell to Louis XI to carry out Charles' project. May 8 is the official holiday of the Order, at which time the knights gather at a chapel on Mont-Saint-Michel. The statues of the Order refer to St. Michel as the warrior who defeated the Dragon, the enemy of mankind.

The date on the muled reverse, 1729, may point to the signing of a major peace treaty between France and Great Britain. This treaty, which included Spain, was signed at Seville. The obverse of this medal commemorates the peace treaty of Versailles between France and Great Britain

of 1783, which concluded the American Revolutionary War. There, thus, could to be a thematic tie between the Order of Saint Michael, referring to the French-British hostility, the 1729 Peace Treaty between France and Britain, and the 1783 Peace Treaty also between the two countries.

Is it possible that the medal was struck to commemorate the 1783 Treaty, by taking out of retirement a die that commemorated the 1729 treaty? Perhaps the medal was struck for the knights of the Order at that time, or possibly for one of them who had a special connection to the Treaty of 1783. (However, the list of knights inducted around this time did not turn up anyone with a clear connection to the treaty.)

Questions:

1. Does anyone know of another specimen of this medal?
2. Is the original 1729 medal listed in Shulman's "*Pax in Nummis*" sale? Is there another reference that lists it?
3. Does anyone have information about the original mate, i.e. obverse design, that was combined with the 1729 reverse? Does this obverse indicate the reason for striking of the original?

Bibliography of Works Used:

American Colonial History Illustrated by Contemporary Medals,
C. Wylls Betts (Boston: Quarterman Publications, 1972).

Les Ordres Du Roi,
Le Comte de Colleville et Francoise Saint-Christo, (Paris).

United States Coins, Public Auction Sale, March 22, 23, 1994,
(Stacks, New York, 1994).



- From: Dr. George Fuld *** A New Bar Cent Copy? (RF-68)
Owings Mills, MD

About 30 years ago, the late Richard Picker sent me this photograph asking if I had ever seen such before. My reply at the time, with the date showing 1777 below USA, was that it looked like a C. Willis Betts production. Weight 86.75 grains, composition is silver. Apparently no other information has ever been published. The ownership of the actual piece is unknown, today. Can anyone provide information?

- and another from Dr. Fuld (RF-69)

Has anyone seen or have record of **gold** 1783 Washington Restrikes?

